

often the case, after they've died. We should let people know that we appreciate them, that their efforts are noticed, while it still makes a difference to them." These wise words are from the pen of Ruth L. Tighe, citizen, librarian, environmentalist, community activist, and newspaper columnist in the Northern Mariana Islands.

I would like to take Ruth's advice and not wait for the new year by telling Congress about Ruth Tighe herself. She is a person whose efforts have been noticed and noteworthy for more than three decades in the Marianas. She has made a difference, and I want her to know how much she is appreciated.

Even before arriving in the Mariana Islands, Ruth was living a remarkable story. Born in Germany in 1931, Ruth emigrated to the United States with her family in 1934. She grew up in upstate New York, became a naturalized citizen and worked her way through school, eventually earning a master's in library science from Columbia University while raising five children as a single mother.

It was as a professional librarian that Ruth came to our islands. She was there to help the people of Guam, the Northern Marianas and the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands prepare for the first-ever White House Conference on Libraries and Information Science held in 1979. Ruth fell in love with the Pacific and soon returned, working for the Marianas Department of Education. She has trained school librarians and raised public awareness about the importance of reading and enriching the quality of our lives.

Ruth eventually turned from managing the written words of others to writing her own. She became a reporter and editor of one of the Marianas newspapers. She also established her signature column, "On My Mind." Over the course of her many years of commenting on island issues, Ruth has always strived to be fair, objective, informative and entertaining. Judging by the popularity of her column, today a much-read and respected blog among people from many diverse backgrounds and walks of life, I believe she has succeeded.

Never afraid of challenges, at the age of 50, Ruth took up scuba diving and has since accumulated a record of over 400 dives. Enamored with the rich coral reefs and colorful marine life Ruth encountered under water, Ruth became a fierce defender of all the natural environment. She has advocated for the protection of coral reefs and native forests, stricter clean-water regulations, the cleanup of PCB contamination in the village of Tanapag, protection of the historic Sugar Dock Beach, and the creation of the national marine monument in the Northern Mariana Islands. Ruth has drawn others to the cause, helping form several community-based environmental groups, including the CNMI Organization For Conservation Outreach, Beautify CNMI, the Friends of the Monument, and the Mariana Islands Nature Alliance.

Here is another familiar view of Ruth. Approaching the microphone at a public hearing and introducing herself, Ruth Tighe, citizen. Through her writing and through her own active participation, Ruth has been an advocate for good governance and a model of informed citizenry. Always, Ruth offers constructive solutions that seek to benefit the islands and all the people, rather than her own personal or professional gain. Among many causes, Ruth has campaigned for the advancement of women's groups, a transparent and accountable government, and a more humanitarian approach to immigration and labor reform.

Ruth's weekly column and other writings have also helped foster and strengthen our sense of community. Often this takes the form of praise to people and organizations in the Marianas for jobs well done, including resourceful teachers, local newspapers for insightful reports, businesses that provided excellent customer service, community volunteers, and numerous individuals who wrote articulate columns or letters of their own.

I feel glad to be able to turn the light back on Ruth herself for the praiseworthy person that she is. Today Ruth is valiantly battling cancer of the lung, successfully, it would appear.

But I want to take her advice and say loud and clear, and on behalf of the people of the Northern Mariana Islands, thank you, Ruth Tighe, for all you have done, and, we pray, will continue to do for years to come to make the Northern Mariana Islands a wonderful place to be.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PAUL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PAUL addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. WOOLSEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

NOVEMBER MASSACRE IN PHILIPPINES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of Mr. BERMAN's resolution, H. Con. Res. 218.

On November 23, 57 people were systematically massacred in the southern Maguindanao Province of the Philippines. The massacre is considered the deadliest election-related attack in the country's history.

Reports have alleged that the massacre was a planned ambush by the

Ampatuan clan on a group of journalists and family members of supporters of a gubernatorial candidate, Ismael Mangudadatu. The group was traveling through the Ampatuan township in a caravan to the provincial capital to file candidacy documents on behalf of Mr. Mangudadatu. The 57 victims were covered in a mass grave only a day after they were killed.

Mr. Mangudadatu, the gubernatorial candidate, has stated that he believes it was clear the attack was planned because the huge hole that acted as the mass grave had been dug before the attack.

The Ampatuan clan is one of the most politically powerful in the region and has ruled the impoverished Maguindanao Province since 2001 with brute force and intimidation. The Ampatuans are notorious for running a large pro-government army, which include many militiamen who serve as an auxiliary force to the military and police when battling insurgents in the region.

Andal Ampatuan, Jr., a local mayor and son of the provincial governor, is believed to have ordered the killings and has been charged with 25 counts of murder. He turned himself in late November.

Philippine President Arroyo declared November 26 a national day of mourning and said, "This is a supreme act of inhumanity that is a blight on our nation. The perpetrators will not escape justice. The law will hunt them until they are caught."

I hope President Arroyo stays true to these words. However, the Ampatuan clan is strongly allied with President Arroyo, and human rights groups are concerned that this relationship could hinder an impartial investigation. Additionally, human rights groups and democracy advocates are concerned about a recent decision President Arroyo made to declare martial law in the region, arguing she lacks the constitutional authority.

Mr. Speaker, as the co-Chair of the Congressional Caucus for Freedom of the Press, there is another element of this attack that is particularly distressing to me. Of the 57 killed in the massacre, 30 were journalists and media workers. According to Reporters Without Borders and the Committee to Protect Journalists, this is the deadliest known attack on journalists in history.

Information is power, which is precisely why journalists far too often become targets for groups like the Ampatuan clan. A free and independent media provides the nourishment for democracy to thrive and grow and expose corrupt factions like the Ampatuan clan. Citizens rely upon credible, accurate information from the media to make informed decisions and hold their leaders accountable. Reporters and editors who demand reform, accountability, and transparency increasingly find themselves at risk. The censorship, intimidation and murder of these